

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



September 13, 1989

We have tried various forms of annual reports to convey the work carried out at Campus Ministry, everything from a statistical analysis to show-and-tell.

This year we thought it would be good to give the job to one member of the Chaplaincy team so that the report might give a tighter overview of the year's events.

We thank you for your support throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Nagy".

Bob Nagy, Director
Campus Ministry

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To attempt to put into writing, or to reduce to statistical figures or charts, a year in the life of Concordia University Chaplains is an impossible task. At best one can only provide some descriptions of events, programmes or activities; but to say that it is an inclusive report of Campus Ministry would be a great injustice to all the individuals involved in the department. This, however, is an effort to provide some reflection on some aspects of the past year in our Chaplaincy offices, the Chapel, and elsewhere within and without the university, where the chaplains have left distinct footprints or otherwise made an impact that is worthy of recording. At the same time I want to re-emphasize the fact that I will only be able to give a sample of the kinds of things that the chaplains are involved with.

The team of chaplains during the past year has been as follows, Director: Rev. Robert Nagy. Chaplains: Daryl Ross, Peter Cote, Rev. Matti Terho. Denominationally hired chaplains, recognized by Concordia University : Nita Kotiuga, Tien-Dat Nguyen (both employed by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship), Sister Michelina Bertone, Rev. Peter Macaskill, Rev. Tim Smart, Rabbi Israel Hausman, Rev. Denis Lajoie, Corrie Sirota (Hillel). Secretary: Marie Hooper. Sacristan-Chapel Manager : Natalie Manzer-O'Neill.

Pastoral acts provide a glimpse at one area of chaplains' work for the university community. It should be noted that the chaplains were involved in at least sixty-five weddings between August 1., 1988 and July 31., 1989. And since each and every marriage involves anywhere from twelve to twenty hours of very intense preparation, we are looking at a very significant amount of time and energy spent in only one aspect of our ministry. It is also noteworthy that on an average there will be approximately one hundred people present at these wedding ceremonies - again this is a great opportunity to give testimony to the community at large as to how the university is willing and able to meet even the very special needs of these members of the institution. The role of the chaplain in the preparation period is also quite critical. Each year there are some four or five couples who decide not to get married, at least not right away, after many consultations with the chaplain, who explores with the couple, among other things, their personal history, reasons for wanting to marry, expectations and aspirations of each partner, priorities, meaning and purpose, etc. The importance of these consultations is also paramount for those who do get married, because they (the consultations) provide valuable preventative "medicine" for the marriage as well as some tools for dealing with the crises that will inevitably come some day.

Baptisms are also a very good opportunity for the chaplains to be helpful to the parents in their efforts to bring up their children and to educate them to become complete human beings, who not only know their own worth, but also that of all other people. During the past year there were some twenty-five baptisms involving Concordia Campus Ministry.

During the year the chaplains were involved in about half a dozen funerals or memorial services. These occasions are quite important because they provide the family and friends an opportunity to find comfort and support in the community, as well as they are a conscious effort to put into perspective the passing away of a friend or a relative.

The availability of regular mass/liturgical expression is also very valuable for a good number of university employees and students. There are numerous individuals in our midst, who are used to, and draw a lot of their strength from, regular worship and prayer. During the past year the chaplains provided those people services both in the Loyola Chapel (on weekdays and twice on Sundays) and in our downtown facility annex Z (once a week). Attendance was particularly good during the Holy Week and Christmas, as well as on other special days, such as Ash Wednesday, Remembrance Day, Ascension Day, etc. In addition the chaplains had private devotions each time there was a regular meeting (every second week). These meetings even though they consume a lot of time, are quite important allowing us to do planning and evaluation, as well as work at team building and recreation.

One way in which the chaplains manage an incredible number of contacts within and without the university community is through co-operative ventures: planning joint events, taking part in departmental and other activities, providing a space for groups, etc. A few examples are : Quakers Worship on Sundays in Belmore House, Concordia Christian Fellowship meetings and Bible Study both at BH and at annex Z, Student association parties also at both facilities (Theology, Italian, Chinese, Residence, Philosophy and African students have had meetings and parties in Belmore House as well as in the Z annex). Muslim Student Association continues to offer daily prayers in the Z annex and also provide tutoring for their own members. Christian Fellowship sponsors free English language classes for foreign students in room Z-106. Other groups frequenting and using our facilities include Social Justice Committee, Canadian Friends of Finland, Benedict Labre House, Catholic Times, Youth in Action, Peace March, Amnesty International Concordia, Women in the Church, Refugee Committee, Diocesan Camp, Narcolepsy Association, Separated, Divorced, Widowed Catholics, Music Department, Concordia Orchestra, etc. Through these and other similar contacts the chaplains have their finger on the pulse not only of the university, but also of the church and the city.

The chaplains also attended the Annual Ecumenical University Chaplains Conference this year in Victoria in May, and participated in last year's student conferences (Lutheran in Paris, Ontario, and Roman Catholic in Guelph, Ontario) in August. These meetings are important for several reasons: they are the only real conscious effort available for specialized "continuing education", they provide an opportunity to gain and uphold a national vision for our ministry, they allow meaningful exchanges between chaplains and students of various universities in Canada.

Other programmes and activities that continue to be carried out by the Chaplaincy are : Prison visitation, Shared Supper, Food for Thought, Skating with the Blind Children, Christmas Basket Drive, Thomas Merton Discussion Group, Liturgy Committee, Bible Study, Vision Therapy and Fully Alive Experience, etc. All of these projects involve many students and allow them to integrate some of their learnings to real life situations and to deepen their understanding of the essentials of existence. As an example one could use the Christmas Basket Drive, which is an old tradition for our community. Every year the chaplains organize this collection of cash and goods for the benefit of the poor in the city. A good number of students and staff members take active part in the process of involving the individuals from the university community with those from the community at large in this charitable venture, and all those, who have had the opportunity of being an active participant, know the feelings of satisfaction for having done something tangible for the less fortunate in our midst.

A new project that is underway already for a couple of semesters is Peer Helper Program. With the co-operation and assistance of the Department of Special Projects of the Rector's Office, Guidance department, Health Center and Concordia University Student Association, the chaplains are working at setting up this project that should become operative later this year. In preparation for this project consultations have taken place between the chaplains and the Ombudsman's Office, Legal Services, as well as other universities where similar programmes already are in existence. This project has received much interest and support from numerous areas of the university community. Other new ideas for the coming year include a chaplains' column in one of the papers, prayer services, several retreats, as well as continuation of the Sacred Music Hour in the Chapel.

From the above it seems pretty obvious that there are lots of activities going on with the chaplains. This does not include any of the "extra-curricular" involvements that each and every one of the chaplains also carry over and above their university duties. Many such things are also at least partially overlapping with their work. Membership and participation in various church groups and committees, activities with different cultural and arts events and groups, social consciousness and justice involvements, fitness and recreation activities, etc. No wonder then that one of the major problems facing the chaplains continues to be finding time and energy to do all the important things while avoiding serious "burn-out".

We are looking forward to a busy and productive, and hopefully also successful year in the life of Campus Ministry at Concordia University.